

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 17, 2011

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and  
Science  
Committee on Appropriations  
United State Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and  
Science  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 2051

Dear Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Hutchison:

We are writing in support of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) in the Fiscal Year 2012 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

We understand and agree with the need to budget carefully this year and value the tough decisions that Congress and the President have made to trim federal spending. Cuts in discretionary spending will be a part of reducing our debt, but targeted investments will also help our economy recover. However federal funding for LSC is important to ensure the most basic legal needs of the poor do not go unattended. In 2010 alone, Colorado's statewide legal aid program assisted over 11,000 low-income individuals and families who were facing serious civil legal problems. The bulk of these cases involve family law (frequently domestic violence), veterans' affairs, consumer issues, and housing. Many are resolved without ever going to court. Providing necessary legal assistance at a critical moment of need helps these Coloradans maintain their independence and avoid a cascade of dire and more costly social problems.

LSC provides the core funding (40%) for these services, which then helps coalesce other resources to meet the need. The other 60% comes from a combination of sources, including interest earned on lawyers' trust accounts, State and local grants, and a successful Private Bar fund-raising campaign. Colorado's LSC-funded program also provides coordination for Colorado Bar-sponsored *pro bono* programs in the State, thus leveraging significant private lawyer time and skill into meeting the critical legal needs of low-income Coloradans.

We appreciate the extremely difficult and constrained budget environment in which we are operating, but even in our present situation, healthy funding for LSC makes good social and economic sense.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Senator Mark E. Udall



Senator Michael F. Bennet